

# REFERENCE

## Rulers of India

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BÁBAR

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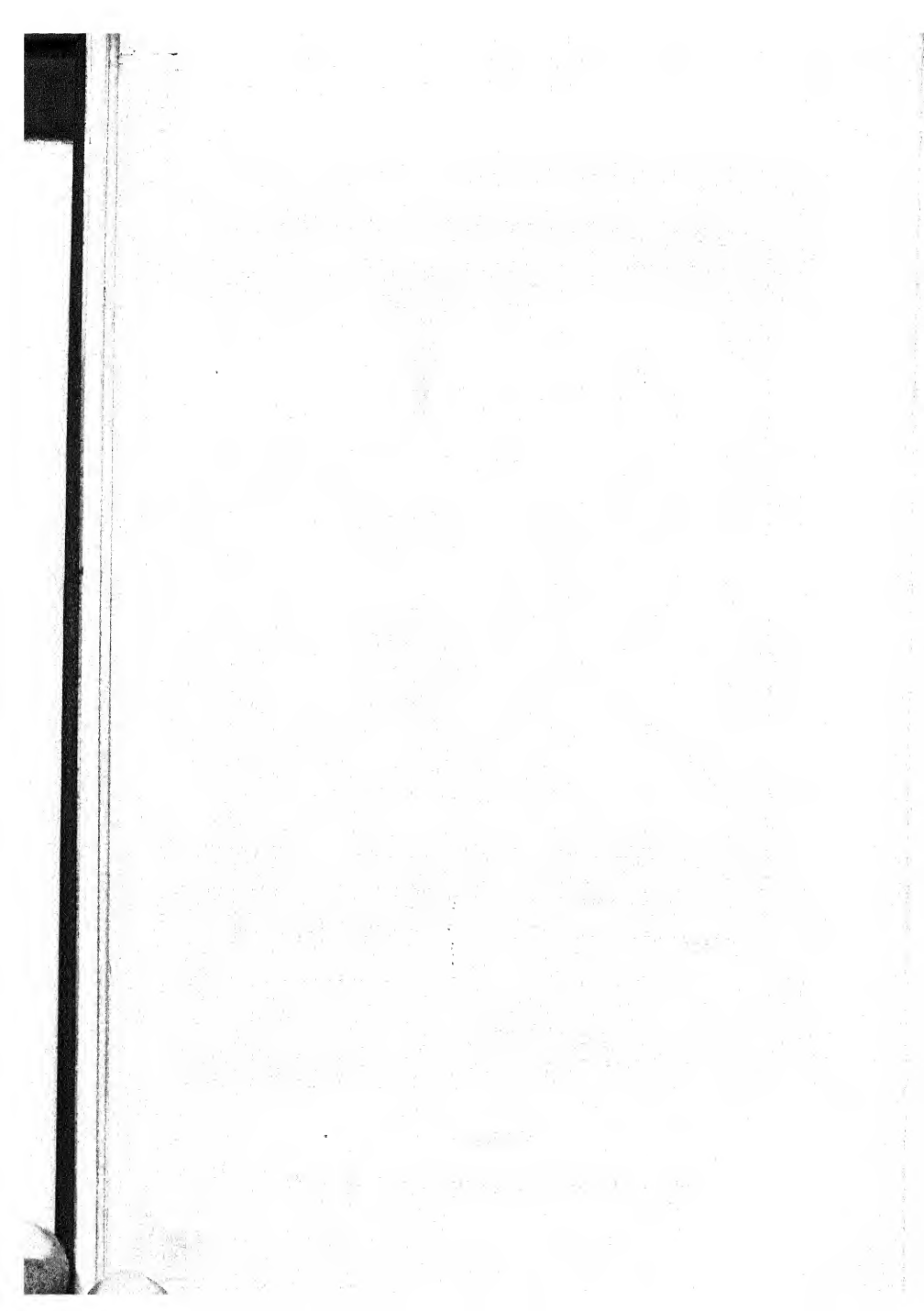
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بابر شاہ

BÁBAR

*From an Indian drawing of the sixteenth century*





# RULERS OF INDIA

Babar

BY

STANLEY LANE-POOLE, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF ARABIC AT TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN



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## NOTE ON AUTHORITIES

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THE chief authority for Bábar's life is his own Memoirs or Commentaries, the *Waká'i* or *Túzak-i-Bábari*, on which see pp. 12-15. The English translation by Erskine and Leyden, and Pavet de Courteille's French version, are both cited, but not always *verbatim*. The blanks in the Memoirs are to some extent filled by notices in the *Taríkh-i-Rashídi*, a history of the Mongols in Central Asia, written by Bábar's cousin, Mirzá Haidar, and completed within seventeen years after the Emperor's death: this important work has been admirably translated and edited by Professor E. Denison Ross and the late Consul-General N. Elias (1895). The *Tabakát-i-Bábari* of Shaikh Zain-ad-dín is little more than an inflated paraphrase of the later portions of the Memoirs. Bábar's daughter, Gul-badan, who survived her father, also left some interesting Memoirs, which remain in MS. in the British Museum (Or. 166). The *Shaibáni-náma* of Muhammad Sálíh (ed. Vambéry, 1885) gives the rhapsodical view of an enemy, and Mirzá Iskandar's history throws light upon Bábar's relations with Sháh Ismá'íl; on which the coins of the period also bear evidence,

as interpreted in the late Professor R. Stuart Poole's *Catalogue of Persian Coins in the British Museum* (1887). Farishta, and Abu-l-Fazl (in the *Akbar-nāma*), base their narratives upon the Memoirs, with little addition of much consequence, and there are but few supplementary notices in Badáóni and other writers extracted in Elliot and Dowson's great *History of India as told by its own Historians*. Erskine made excellent use of most of the available materials in the first volume of his *History of India* (1854), a most scholarly and profound work. Mr. H. G. Keene has also treated the subject ably in his *Turks in India* (1879). Essays relating to Bábar have been published by Silvestre de Sacy, Darmesteter (*Journal Asiatique*, 1888, 1890), Teufel (*Z. D. M. G.* xxxvii); and also by Mr. H. Beveridge (*Calcutta Review*, 1897), to whom, through Sir W. W. Hunter, I am indebted for bibliographical information. Unfortunately there was no European traveller who visited Bábar's court either in Farghána, or Kábul, or Agra, and we are thus deprived of the advantage of a western estimate of his person and character.

The map is based upon several sources: my own map of mediaeval India, published in my *Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum*; Mr. Elias's admirable map of Central Asia in the *Taríkh-i-Rashúli*; Sir H. Yule's map in Wood's *Oxus*; Waddington's map prefixed to Erskine's translation of Bábar's Memoirs; and my map of Western Asia (No. 81) in the *Historical Atlas* edited by my brother (Oxford, 1899).

The portrait is from the MS. in the British Museum (Add. 5,717, fol. 52), and though probably not earlier than the end of the sixteenth century, doubtless represents a tradition, and probably copies an earlier miniature. The British Museum possesses a magnificent copy (Or. 3,714) of the best Persian translation of the Memoirs, illustrated by a series of sixty-eight exquisitely beautiful pictures of scenes in Bábar's life, painted chiefly by Hindu artists of the time of Akbar, some of whom are mentioned by Abu-l-Fazl in the *Aín-i-Akbari*.

S. L.-P.

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, May, 1899.

# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
NOTE ON AUTHORITIES . . . . .	5
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	9
PART I. STRUGGLE	
II. FARGHÁNA, 1494 . . . . .	17
III. SAMARKAND WON AND LOST, 1494-1500 . . . . .	33
IV. SECOND CONQUEST OF SAMARKAND, 1500-1501 . . . . .	49
V. EXILE, 1502 . . . . .	62
VI. FLIGHT, 1502-1503 . . . . .	75
PART II. KINGDOM	
VII. KÁBUL, 1504-1505 . . . . .	87
VIII. HERÁT, 1506-1507 . . . . .	102
IX. KÁBUL AND KANDAHÁR, 1507-1510 . . . . .	118
X. SAMARKAND ONCE MORE, 1510-1514. . . . .	128
PART III. EMPIRE	
XI. THE INVASION OF INDIA, 1519-1524 . . . . .	137
XII. PÁNÍPAT, 1524-1526 . . . . .	156
XIII. HINDÚSTÁN, 1526-1528 . . . . .	169
XIV. EMPIRE, 1528-1530 . . . . .	185
INDEX . . . . .	201
PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR BÁBAR. . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MAP . . . . .	<i>Face page 16</i>

# *THE EMPEROR BÁBAR*



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

‘In the month of Ramazán of the year eight hundred and ninety-nine [June, 1494], I became King of Farghána.’ Such are the opening words of the celebrated Memoirs of Bábar, first of the ‘Moghul’ Emperors of Hindústán.

Bábar is the link between Central Asia and India, between predatory hordes and imperial government, between Tamerlane and Akbar. The blood of the two great Scourges of Asia, Chingiz and Tímúr, mixed in his veins, and to the daring and restlessness of the nomad Tatar he joined the culture and urbanity of the Persian. He brought the energy of the Mongol, the courage and capacity of the Turk, to the listless Hindu; and, himself a soldier of fortune and no architect of empire, he yet laid the first stone of the splendid fabric which his grandson Akbar achieved.

His connexion with India began only in the last

twelve years of his life. His youth was spent in ineffectual struggles to preserve his sovereignty in his native land. His early manhood, passed in his new kingdom of Kábul, was full of an unsatisfied yearning for the recovery of his mother country. It was not till the age of thirty-six that he abandoned his hope of a restored empire on the Oxus and Iaxartes, and turned his eyes resolutely towards the cities and spoils of Hindústán. Five times he invaded the northern plains, and the fifth invasion was a conquest. Five years he dwelt in the India he had now made his own, and in his forty-eighth year he died.

His permanent place in history rests upon his Indian conquests, which opened the way for an imperial line; but his place in biography and in literature is determined rather by his daring adventures and persevering efforts in his earlier days, and by the delightful *Memoirs* in which he related them. Soldier of fortune as he was, Bábar was not the less a man of fine literary taste and fastidious critical perception. In Persian, the language of culture, the Latin of Central Asia, as it is of India, he was an accomplished poet, and in his native Turki he was master of a pure and unaffected style alike in prose and verse<sup>1</sup>. The Turkish princes of his time prided

<sup>1</sup> His cousin, Mirzá Haidar, himself the author of a famous history, wrote of him that he was 'adorned with various virtues and clad with numberless excellences, above all which towered bravery and humanity. In the composition of Turki poetry he was



themselves upon their literary polish, and to turn an elegant *ghazal*, or even to write a beautiful manuscript, was their peculiar ambition, no less worthy or stimulating than to be master of sword or mace. In some of the boldly sketched portraits of his contemporaries which enliven the Memoirs, Bábar often passes abruptly from warlike or administrative qualities to literary gifts; he will tell how many battles a king fought, and then, as if to clinch the tale of his merits, he will add that he was a competent judge of poetry and was fond of reading the *Sháh Náma*, yet had such a fist that 'he never struck a man but he felled him.' Of another dignitary he notes regretfully that 'he never read, and though a townsman he was illiterate and unrefined'; on the other hand 'a brave man' is commended the more because he 'wrote the *nasta'lik* hand,' though, truly, 'after a fashion.' Wit and learning, the art of turning a quatrain on the spot, quoting the Persian classics, writing a good hand, or singing a good song, were highly appreciated in Bábar's world, as much perhaps

second only to Amír 'Alí Shír. He has written a *diván* in the purest and most lucid Turki. He invented a style of verse called *mubaiyyan*, and was the author of a most useful treatise on jurisprudence which has been generally adopted. He also wrote an essay on Turki prosody, more elegant than any other, and versified the *Rasála-i-Válidíya* of his Reverence. Then there is his *Wakáí*, or Turki 'Memoirs,' written in a simple, unaffected, yet very pure style. He excelled in music and other arts. Indeed, no one of his family before him ever possessed such talents, nor did any of his race perform such amazing exploits or experience such strange adventures.' (*Tarikh-i-Rashidí*, Ross and Elias.)

as valour, and infinitely more than virtue. Bábar himself will break off in the middle of a tragic story to quote a verse, and he found leisure in the thick of his difficulties and dangers to compose an ode on his misfortunes. His battles as well as his orgies were humanized by a breath of poetry.

Hence his Memoirs are no rough soldier's chronicle of marches and countermarches, 'saps, mines, blinds, gabions, palisadoes, ravelins, half-moons, and such trumpery'; they contain the personal impressions and acute reflections of a cultivated man of the world, well read in Eastern literature, a close and curious observer, quick in perception, a discerning judge of persons, and a devoted lover of nature; one, moreover, who was well able to express his thoughts and observations in clear and vigorous language. 'His autobiography,' says a sound authority<sup>1</sup>, 'is one of those priceless records which are for all time, and is fit to rank with the confessions of St. Augustine and Rousseau, and the memoirs of Gibbon and Newton. In Asia it stands almost alone.' There is no doubt a vast deal of dreary chronicle in the Memoirs, much desultory trifling, some repetition, and needlessly minute descriptions of secondary characters and incidents; the first part is infinitely better than the end; but with all this, the shrewd comments and lively impressions which break in upon the narrative give Bábar's reminiscences a unique and penetrating flavour. The man's own

<sup>1</sup> Mr. H. Beveridge, *Calcutta Rev.*, 1897.

character is so fresh and buoyant, so free from convention and cant, so rich in hope, courage, resolve, and at the same time so warm and friendly, so very human, that it conquers one's admiring sympathy. The utter frankness of self-revelation, the unconscious portraiture of all his virtues and follies, his obvious truthfulness and fine sense of honour, give the *Memoirs* an authority which is equal to their charm. If ever there were a case when the testimony of a single historical document, unsupported by other evidence, should be accepted as sufficient proof, it is the case with Bábar's *Memoirs*. No reader of this prince of autobiographers can doubt his honesty or his competence as witness and chronicler.

Very little is known about the mode in which they were composed. That they were written at different dates, begun at one time and taken up again after long intervals, as leisure or inclination suggested, is to be inferred from the sudden way in which they break off, generally at a peculiarly critical moment, to be resumed without a word of explanation at a point several years later. The style, moreover, of the later portions is markedly different from that of the earlier, whilst the earlier portions bear internal evidence of revision at a later date. The natural (though conjectural) inference is that the *Memoirs* were written at various dates; that the earlier part was revised and enlarged after Bábar's invasion of India, though memory failed or time was wanting to fill the gaps; and that the later part

remains in its original form of a rough diary because its author died before he had leisure or energy to revise it. The Memoirs were written in Turki, Bábar's native tongue. A copy of the work was in his cousin Haidar's hands, who probably obtained it during his visit to India within ten years of its author's death. Another copy, which appears to be the original of all the existing manuscripts, was transcribed from an original in Bábar's own handwriting by his eldest son, the Emperor Humáyún, in 1553, as is stated in an interpolation by Humáyún in the body of the work<sup>1</sup>. That the son was a faithful copyist is evident, for he has not suppressed several passages in which his own conduct is censured by his father.

The Memoirs were more than once translated from Turki into Persian; notably, with scrupulous accuracy, by the illustrious, Mirzá Abdu-r-Rahím, son of Bairam Khán, in 1590, by the desire of the Emperor Akbar. The close agreement, even in trifling details, of the various Turki and Persian manuscripts preserved in several collections, shows that the original text has been faithfully respected, and such variations as exist do not affect the essential accuracy of the document. Even the gaps in the narrative unfortunately occur at the same places and for the same intervals in all the manuscripts, Turki and Persian, with the exception of two or three short but interesting passages which one Turki text alone presents.

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, Erskine and Leyden, 303; Pavet de Courteille, ii. 159.

This text was printed at Kazan by M. Ilminski in 1857, and was translated into French by M. Pavet de Courteille in 1871. Long before this, a translation into vigorous English, by John Leyden and William Erskine, based upon a collation of Persian and Turki manuscripts, and enriched with a valuable introduction and copious notes, appeared in 1826, and has ever since held its place as the standard version<sup>1</sup>. It represents the Persian more than the Turki text, but how little the two differ, and how trifling are the emendations (save in Turki words and names) to be gained from the Turki version, may be seen by a comparison of the French and English translations.

This comparison of two versions founded upon several manuscripts written in two languages brings us to the remarkable conclusion that Bábar's Memoirs have come through the ordeals of translation and transcription practically unchanged. We possess, in effect, the *ipsissima verba* of an autobiography written early in the sixteenth century by one of the most interesting and famous men of all Asia. It is a literary fact of no little importance. The line of Emperors who proceeded from Bábar's loins is no more. The very name of Mongol has lost its influence on the banks of Iaxartes; the Turk is the servant of the Russian he once despised. The last Indian sovereign of Tímúr's race ended his inglorious

<sup>1</sup> It was abridged by Mr. R. M. Caldecott, 1844, in a readable *Life of Bábar*.

career an exile at Rangoon; a few years later, the degenerate descendants of Chingiz Kaán submitted to the officers of the Tsar. The power and pomp of Bábar's dynasty are gone; the record of his life—the *littera scripta* that mocks at time—remains unaltered and imperishable.

## CHAPTER II

### FARGHÁNA

1494

IN 1494 Bábar inherited the kingdom of Farghána from his father, 'Omar Shaikh, a son of Abú-Sa'id, the great-grandson of the Amír Tímúr or Tamerlane.

A hundred years had passed since the Barlás Turk, in a series of triumphant campaigns, had made himself master of the western half of Asia, from Káshghar on the edge of the terrible mid-Asian desert, to the cliffs of the Aegean sea. He had driven the Knights of Rhodes out of their castle at Smyrna, and had even marched into India and sacked Delhi. In 1405 he was on his way to subdue China and set all the continent of Asia beneath his feet, when death intervened. Tímúr's conquests were too recent, too hasty and imperfect, to permit the organization of a settled empire. They were like a vast conflagration driven before the wind, which destroys the herbage for a while; but when the flame has passed away, the earth grows green again. Many of the princes, who had fled before the blast of Tímúr's hurricane, came back to their old seats when the destroyer was departed; and it was only over part of Persia and

over the country beyond the Oxus that his descendants maintained their hold when that iron hand was stiff. Even there, a single century witnessed their universal downfall; the fire had only left some embers, which smouldered awhile, but, lacking the kindling and stirring of the great incendiary, finally died out. After that, the sole relic of Tímúr's vast dominion was the little kingdom which an exiled prince of his own brave blood set up among the crags and passes of the Afghán hills, whence came the 'Great Moghuls' and the glories of Delhi and Agra.

Bábar in exile founded a grandiose empire, but Bábar in the home of his forefathers was but a little prince among many rivals. Every one of the numerous progeny of Tímúr was a claimant to some throne. Mawaránnahr or Transoxiana—the land of the two great rivers, Oxus and Iaxartes, the Amu and Sir Darya of to-day—was a cockpit for the jealousy and strife of a multitude of petty princes, who, whether they called themselves Mirzás in Persian, or Kháns in Turki, or plain Amírs in Arabic, resembled one another closely in character and ambition. The character was 'earthly, sensual, devilish'; the ambition was to grasp power and wealth, *quocunque modo rem*, at the sacrifice of kindred, faith, and honour.

Over this crew of scheming adventurers, the King of Samarkand endeavoured to maintain some show of authority. This was Sultán Ahmad Mirzá<sup>1</sup>, Bábar's

<sup>1</sup> Sultán was a common title among Turkish and Persian princes and nobles, and did not imply the supreme sovereignty of an



uncle, a weak easy-going toper, managed by his Begs or nobles. He represented the central power of Tímúr's empire, but he represented a shadow. Further east, from his citadel of Hisár, Ahmad's brother Mahmúd ruled the country of the Upper Oxus, Kunduz, and Badakhshán, up to the icy barrier of the Hindú Kúsh. A third brother, Ulugh Beg, held Kábul and Ghazní; and a fourth, Bábar's father, 'Omar Shaikh, was King of Farghána, or as it was afterwards called Khókand. His capital was Andiján, but he was staying at the second city, Akhsi, when happening to visit his pigeons in their house overhanging the cliff, on June 9, 1494, by a singular accident the whole building slid down the precipice, and he fell ingloriously to the bottom 'with his pigeons and dovecote, and winged his flight to the other world.' Besides these four brothers, Sultán Husain Baikará, a cousin four times removed, ruled at Herát, with much state and magnificence, what was left of the Tímúrid empire in Khurásán, from Balkh near the Oxus to Astarábád beside the Caspian sea.

These were the leading princes of Tímúr's race at the time of Bábar's accession; but they do not exhaust the chief sources of political disturbance. Further east and north the Mongol tribes, still led by descendants of Chingiz Kaán, mustered in multitudes in their

Osmánli Sultán. *Mirzá* after a name connotes royal blood. In general the full style, such as Sultán Mahmúd Mirzá, &c., will here be curtailed to the essential name Mahmúd, &c., or Mahmúd Mirzá when a distinction is needed from Mahmúd Khán.

favourite grazing steppes. Yúnus Khán, their chief, who owed his position to Bábar's paternal grandfather, had given three of his daughters in marriage to three of the brothers we have named, and one of them was the mother of Bábar. The connexion in no degree hampered the Mongols' natural love of war, and Mahmúd Khán<sup>1</sup>, who had succeeded his father Yúnus on the white pelt or coronation seat of the tribes, played a conspicuous part in the contests which distracted Bábar's youth. Yet Mahmúd Khán, for a Mongol, was a man of sedate and civilized habits, who abhorred the rough life of the tents, and held his court in the populous city of Táshkend, a little north of his nephew's dominions. His defection sorely galled the Mongol patriots, but fortunately his younger brother Ahmad Khán had his full share of the national passion for the wastes, and to him was drawn the fealty of the clans who retained their primitive customs in the plains to the east of Farghána. He, too, mixed in the struggles of the time, and like his brother Mahmúd fixed his eyes on Samarkand, the stately capital of Tímúr, whilst both felt the Mongol's fierce delight in mere fighting.

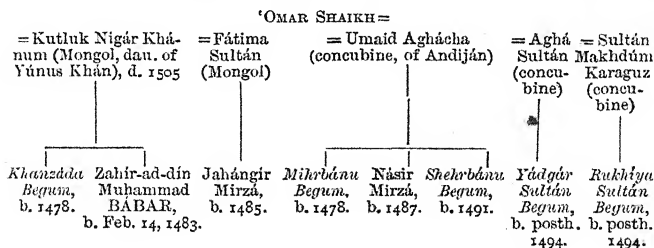
Besides these chiefs who were entitled, by descent from Chingiz or Tímúr, to wrangle over their inheritance, there were many minor nobles who had no such

<sup>1</sup> The Turkish title Khán distinguishes these Mongol chiefs from their Persianated relations in Transoxiana. Thus Mahmúd *Khán* was Bábar's maternal uncle, of Táshkend; Mahmúd *Mirzá* was Bábar's paternal uncle, of Hisár.

title, but, like the Dughlát Amírs of Káshghar and Uratipa—Mongols of blue blood—or the Tarkhāns of Samarkand, came of a privileged family, and, if not the rose, were so near it that they often plucked its petals. And beyond these, like a cloud on the horizon, gathered the Uzbek tribes of Turkistán and Otrár, on the lower Iaxartes,—soon to overshadow the heritage of Tímúr, and under their great leader, Shaibáni Khán, to become the most formidable power on the Oxus,—the one power before which even Bábar turned and fled.

In the midst of the confusion and strife of so many jarring interests, the child of eleven suddenly found himself called upon to play the part of king. Of his earlier years hardly anything is known. He was born on the 6th of Muharram, 888, St. Valentine's day, 1483<sup>1</sup>. A courier was at once sent to bear the good news to his mother's father, Yúnus, the Khán of the Mongols, and the grand old chief of seventy years came to Farghāna and joined heartily in the rejoicings and feasts with which they celebrated the

<sup>1</sup> 'Omar Shaikh had three sons and five daughters by five of his wives and concubines :



shaving of his grandson's head. As the ill-educated Mongols could not pronounce his Arabic name—Zahír-ad-dín Muhammad—they dubbed him 'Bábar.' At the age of five, the child was taken on a visit to Samarkand, where he was betrothed to his cousin 'Áisha, the infant daughter of Sultan Ahmad; and during this visit, on the occasion of a great wedding, Bábar was sent to pluck the veil from the bride, for good luck. The next six years must have been spent in education, and well spent, for he had little leisure in after years to improve himself, and his remarkable attainments in the two languages he wrote imply steady application. Of this early training we hear nothing, but it is reasonable to suppose that an important part of it was due to the women of his family. The Mongol women retained the virtues of the desert, unspoiled by luxury or by Muhammadanism. They were brave, devoted, and simple; and among the constant references in Bábar's Memoirs to the almost universal habit of drunkenness among the men, we find but one solitary allusion—evidently a reproach—to a woman 'who drank wine.' The women of Bábar's Mongol blood clung to him through all his troubles with devoted fortitude, though his Turkish wives deserted him; and their sympathy in later life must have been the result of tender association in childhood.

Above them all, his grandmother, Isán-daulat Begum, the widow of Yúnus, stood pre-eminent. 'Few equalled her in sense and sagacity,' her grandson says; 'she was wonderfully far-sighted and judicious; many

important matters and enterprises were undertaken at her instance.' The story told of her when her husband fell into the hands of his enemy reveals a Spartan character. The conqueror had allotted her to one of his officers, though Yúnus was living. The Begum, however, offered no objection, but received her new bridegroom affably. The moment he was in her room, she had the doors locked, and made her women servants stab him to death, and throw his body into the street. To the messenger who came from the conqueror to learn the meaning of this, she said: 'I am the wife of Yúnus Khán. Shaikh Jamál gave me to another man, contrary to law; so I slew him; and the Shaikh may slay me too if he pleases.' Struck by her constancy, Jamál restored her in all honour to her husband, whose prison she shared for a year, till both were freed.

This great lady was a rock of strength to her grandson in the years of his premature kingship. He was at the Pavilion of the Four Gardens at Andiján when the news of his father's sudden death reached him, in June, 1494. His first thought was to make himself sure of the capital before a brother, an uncle, or some disloyal Beg should take the chance and seize it. He instantly mounted his horse, called a handful of his followers, and rode to the citadel—the vital point to secure. As he drew near, one of his officers caught his rein, and bade him beware of falling into a trap. How could he tell whether the garrison were loyal? He was turning aside to the

terrace, to await overtures, when the Begs who held the citadel sent a message of welcome by one of those Khwájás or holy men whose word was as sacred as their influence was profound in the politics of the day. Bábar entered the citadel as king, and they all set to work without delay to put the fortress into a state of defence.

It was not a moment too soon. The little kingdom was menaced on three sides by invasions bequeathed by his hasty-tempered father. Two uncles were already on the march to seize the throne: they had agreed that their quarrelsome brother, 'Omar Shaikh, had become unbearable, and though he had meanwhile made his singular exit from life through the dovecote, they did not change their plans. Ahmad Mirzá advanced from Samarkand; his brother-in-law Mahmúd Khán from Táshkend. Uratipa, Khojend, and Marghinán, in rapid succession opened their gates to Ahmad, and he was close to Andiján at the very time when Bábar got into the castle. Resistance seemed hopeless, and the boy sent an embassy of submission, protesting that he was his invader's 'servant and son,' and begging to be allowed the rank of viceroy over the land where by right he was king. The overture was harshly repelled, and the advance continued. Fortunately for Bábar, a river lay between, a black and turbid stream with a slimy bottom. On the narrow bridge the enemy pressed too eagerly, and many fell over and were drowned. The croakers recalled a disaster that had happened once before to

an army on that very bridge in just the same way. Panic seized the superstitious troopers, and they could not be induced to move forward. The horses, too, were done up, and sickness broke out in the camp. Ahmad was no man to face an emergency. He made terms with Bábar, retaining the cities he had taken, and ingloriously made his way homewards, only to die on the road.

Mahmúd Khán, meanwhile, had annexed the northern town of Kásán and was laying siege to Akhsi, the second city of the kingdom. Here he met with an unexpected resistance: the fort was stoutly defended by the Begs of Bábar's father, and Mahmúd, after several assaults, retired to his own country. He was more celebrated for beginning than for achieving a campaign. A third invader, the Dughlát Amír of Káshghar and Khotan, seized Uzkend, and built a fortress to secure it; but Bábar's men had little trouble in dislodging him.

The danger was over, but not the loss. Bábar was now indeed king of Farghána, but his kingdom was shrunk to the eighty miles of rivage between Andiján and Akhsi. The rest had to be won back from his powerful neighbours. For many years he never lost sight of this object. His dearest ambition was, not only to recover his father's realm, but to seat himself at Samarkand on the throne of his great ancestor Tímúr. This was the *grande idée* to which he devoted his youth and early manhood.

To those who imagine the country beyond the Oxus

to be a desert dotted with ruins buried in sand, it may seem an idle dream. They forget that the great provinces, known to the Greeks and Romans as Sogdiana, Margiana, and Bactriana, were a favoured part of Alexander's empire, where more than one Alexandria marked the conqueror's path. Samarkand, Bukhárá, and Balkh were famous cities of antiquity, and throughout the middle ages they were renowned for wealth and commerce, and not less for learning and the arts. The Persian Sámánids had held their splendid court there; Tímúr had enriched Samarkand with the spoils of his universal conquests; he had brought skilled craftsmen and artists from the uttermost parts of Asia to build him 'stately pleasure domes' and splendid mosques; and his capital became one of the most beautiful as it had long been one of the most cultivated cities of the East. Science had found a home in the Oxus province since Fárábi the philosopher and Farghání the astronomer pursued their researches there in the ninth century; and Tímúr's grandson, Ulugh Beg, carried on the tradition by building the observatory at Samarkand where his famous star tables were drawn up for the perpetual information of astronomers. The incomparable Avicenna himself was a Bukháriote.

Centres of learning are usually centres of plenty. Men of science do not burrow like conies in the desert rocks: they live where the toils of learning may be alleviated by the comforts that attend wealth. The country about the two great rivers and their tributary



streams was one of the most fertile in Asia. Farghána itself was prodigal of fruit and laden with heavy harvests. Abundantly watered by the Sir, and sheltered on all sides from the outer world by fostering hills—save where a gap to the south-west opened out towards Samarkand—the little province, smaller than Ireland, was a garden, an orchard, a vineyard. Grapes and melons ripened to perfection at Andiján, innumerable mills plashed in the watercourses and ground the grain yielded by the generous earth. The beautiful gardens of Ush, a day's march to the south, were gay with violets, tulips, and roses in their seasons, and between the brooks the cattle browsed on the rich clover meadows. At Marghinán, a little to the west, the third city of Farghána, grew such apricots and pomegranates that a man would journey from afar to taste them: many years after he was banished from his land, Bábar recalled with a sigh the flavour of the dried apricots stuffed with almonds which were so good at Marghinán. The luscious pomegranates of Khojend were not to be despised, but the melons of Akhsi—who could resist the melons of Akhsi, which had not their equal in the world, not even in the spreading melon fields of Bukhárá? If he thought of the apricots of Marghinán in the days of his exile, Bábar suffered the dreams of a Tantalus when he remembered the lost joys of the melons of Akhsi. But there was more sustaining food than melon-pulp among the hills and woods of his native land. The pastures nourished herds of cattle, sheep and goats cut

their devious tracks on the mountain sides, pheasants, white deer, hares, wild goats, gave sport to the hunter and his hawk. Farghána indeed was a land of milk and honey, an oasis of plenty between the deserts of Khiva and the Takla Makán. The snow-capped hills that clipped it tempered its climate, and during the heats of summer welcomed its inhabitants to their cool retreats.

The people with whom the child-king was to dwell were of mixed race and varied character. The old Persian sons of the soil still formed the mass of the population, and tilled the earth for their masters; but they were of so little political account that they were known as 'strangers,' *tájiks*, much as the Saxons miscalled the ancient Britons 'Welsh.' The *Tájiks* were the hewers of wood and drawers of water for their Mongol and Turkish conquerors. In the towns the same Persian race, under the name of *Sarts*, formed the trading class, and performed the part of general utility. The ruling race was a mixture of those tribes which from time immemorial have migrated from the central steppes and swept over the lands which other folk had made ready for them. They comprised people of the Turkish nations, Uighurs, Naimans, Karluks, with Mongols proper and *Kálmaks*. When a Khán conquered another Khán he usually took his daughter or widow to wife, and the result of this constant crossing was the gradual obliteration of the distinctive characteristics of race among the upper classes. Yúnus Khán, for example, a Mongol

by paternal descent, who ought to have been smooth-cheeked with Mongolian features, was described as having 'a full beard and a Tájik face,' and doubtless he was one of many similar cross-breeds.

Bábar himself was through his mother a grandson of Yúnus, and a descendant of the great Mongol Chingiz Kaán, but on his father's side he came down from Tímúr, the Barlás Turk. The Mongols called him and his kindred 'Chaghatais,' but he always called himself a Turk, and spoke of the Mongols with superb contempt. The Indian empire of the 'Great Moghuls' had not then restored honour to the name, and the Mongols of the pastoral steppes east and north of Farghána must certainly have appeared an uncouth race to the comparatively polished gentlemen of the towns, who wrote charming Persian odes, and had a horror of the discomforts of the deserts. These town 'Turks' (as we must call them, despite their mixed breed) occupied themselves with the pleasures and profits of a governing class. They were intelligent, often cultivated, brave, and energetic; they were also cruel, vicious, and treacherous. As liars they had few equals. They could rarely be trusted if anything was to be gained by betrayal.

The Memoirs contain some spirited portraits of the men among whom Bábar spent his early years. We can see his father, 'Omar Shaikh, almost as clearly as if we had met him: a short 'podgy' monarch, with stubbly brown beard, carelessly dressed, and apt to burst his coat strings in moments of energy or

repletion; an assiduous toper, taking kindly to malt liquor, and poppy juice and bhang, but hardly steady in nerve after his two regular drinking bouts a week. A strong man, nevertheless, who never struck out but he floored his man; something of a poet, too, who could turn out a fair copy of verses, and delighted in reading the *Shāh Nāma*; in character honest to a fault, but hasty in temper and policy, and too ready to 'change peace for war, and friendship for hatred.' 'His generosity was large,' says his son, 'and so was his whole soul: he was of a rare humour, genial, eloquent, and sweet in his discourse, yet brave withal and manly.' His weakness, besides the bottle, was backgammon.

His court held men of many turns. There was Bābar's tutor, Shaikh Mazīd, 'a great disciplinarian' over others, but himself unbridled in sensual abominations. Khwāja Husain was a good-tempered easy-going fellow, of simple habits, who sang a capital song when the wine was going round. He had a genial comrade in Hasan Ya'kúb Beg, who could reel off an ode, was inimitable at leap-frog, played a good game at polo, and was altogether a frank, good-humoured, clever, handy man. They were not all thus, for 'Ali Majīd is described bluntly as 'a vicious, treacherous, good-for-nothing hypocrite'; and the Grand Huntsman, who pretended to sorcery, was a disagreeable, sour-faced, conceited boor, whose vulgarity and insincerity were matched by his meanness and greed of gold. The Great Seal made a pleasing contrast, 'a

most witty and humoursome personage—but reckless in debauch.’ Kambar<sup>1</sup> ‘Ali, once a skinner by trade, seemed to have his wits but skin-deep: ‘he talked a great deal, and very idly—a great talker can’t help saying foolish things at times—his talents were narrow, and he had a muddy brain.’ In spite of this unfortunate peculiarity, Kambar ‘Ali served his uncomplimentary master well at many a pinch.

One of Bábar’s best sketches is of his uncle Ahmad, the King of Samarkand, who so nearly swallowed up his nephew’s inheritance. He was a true Turk, ‘tall, ruddy, and corpulent,’ bearded only on the chin, and particular about the lie of his turban, which he always wore in the four-plait fashion with the hitch over the eyebrow. He was scrupulously devout, never omitting the regulation-prayers, even between the decanters, and his veneration for his Khwāja or spiritual director was such that he would not think of uncrossing his leg, were it never so cramped, whilst they were engaged in serious discourse. Only once did he break this rule, and then it was found that the king had been sitting by chance upon a bone—some relic of a royal banquet—in sore discomfort. He was not intellectual, one must admit, and did not read at all; for a town-bred Turk he was conspicuously illiterate and unrefined; genius had not been lavish to him: but he had the virtues of his defects, he was a plain honest Turk, a man of few words, just and true in his

<sup>1</sup> Written Kanbar, but pronounced Kambar; so Tanbal, Tambal, further on.

dealings, faithful to his treaty, and never swerving by a line from his covenant.

His words were bonds, his oaths were oracles,

His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.

He was a sportsman, moreover, of rare skill, such as had not been known since Ulugh Beg forgot the intricacies of astronomy in the excitement of the chase. Hawking was his favourite sport, and seldom did his goshawk miss the quarry. He was a famous archer, and a sure marksman when taking a galloping shot at the Mongolian popinjay—a platter set upon a pole. So modest and discreet were his manners that he was never known to let his bare foot peep out from beneath his robes, even in private: yet 'he would drink day and night without a break for twenty or thirty days on end,' not indeed in morose solitude, but in full court, toping jovially among his Begs. Then for an equal interval he would abstain, and comfort his stomach with pungent delicacies, to restore its tone. Unfortunately he had no will of his own, and his boonfellows, who were also his ministers, led him as they pleased, so that he found himself plunged into adventures to which his sober judgement—when it was so—would not have committed him. But Ahmad Mirzá's drinking days were nearly over at the date when this history begins. He died on his way home from his invasion of Bábar's country, and in the struggles that ensued the young prince soon began to play a conspicuous part.

## CHAPTER III

### SAMARKAND WON AND LOST

1494-1500

IN reading the story of Bábar's adventures, two reflections at once arise: in no country or period of history was the influence more obvious of the sentiment or 'divinity,' that 'doth hedge a king,' and seldom has a king's personal character responded more generously to the homage. The long obedience of the patient East set a halo of reverence around the youthful sovereign, without which even his indomitable spirit could scarcely have asserted itself; but this obedience of the dumb animal, this time-honoured respect for inherited authority, was transformed among the masses into something like enthusiastic devotion by the brave and noble qualities of the boyish hero. Bábar possessed a power of winning hearts, which stood him in good stead with the many, even when his influence waned among the chiefs.

It seems absurd to treat a child of twelve as if he were a ruler of men, and it would be idle to deny a share in the result to his more mature advisers. But we have seen the characters of some of the men who formed his father's court and afterwards constituted

the 'ministry' of the youthful heir, and it is not reasonable to suppose that such men, of their own initiative, could have planned what was demonstrably achieved in Bābar's 'teens.' Most of them, as will appear, were corrupt and self-seeking, and the higher their rank and talents the less trustworthy they became. A sufficient bribe, an opening for power or plunder, or the mere prudence that might save their skin, promoted 'hedging,' and led them to desert their master in critical emergencies.

Ministers and commanders changed, hesitated, intrigued, forsook him, but Bābar remained steadfast. He used their service as long as they yielded it, but if they chose to desert him he had the gift to supply their place. When almost all abandoned him, and none believed in his star, Bābar never lost faith. His serene constancy of purpose, his noble fortitude, are the only invariable elements in the vicissitudes of his early life, the one unfailing antidote to the poison of intrigue. Making every allowance for the temporary and often time-serving assistance of his shifty Begs, we must admit that, despite his absurd youthfulness, the prime cause of his early successes was Bābar himself. After all, a boy in the East has often shown signs of precocious ability. Akbar was not fourteen when he came to the throne; Sulaiman the Great was intrusted with high commands in his youth; and Bābar was but another example of rapid development.

How little even the best among his officers could be trusted was shown when he had hardly mounted the



throne. The pleasant-spoken adept at leap-frog, the delight of the polo-field, Hasan Ya'kúb, who had been made prime minister, almost regent, of the realm, began an intrigue to crown Bábar's younger brother Jahángír, as a readier tool to his own ambition,—or to that of his fellow-conspirator, the new King of Samarkand. He forgot that he had to reckon with a shrewd old woman. Bábar's grandmother, scented the plot, and the agile minister had to take to his heels; on his way to Samarkand he fell in a skirmish, 'a sacrifice to his own misdeeds,' shot by a chance arrow by his own men. The episode evidently made an impression on the little king, who seems to have taken his responsibilities seriously, and set himself to live by rule: 'This year,' he says, 'I began to abstain from forbidden and doubtful meats, and extended my precautions to the knife, the spoon, and the table-cloth. I also seldom omitted my midnight prayers.'

It was a time when a man might well set his house in order. A period of anarchy, worse even than the disorders of the late reign, was at hand. Ahmad Mirzá had been followed at Samarkand by his brother Mahmúd, and the change was immediately felt. The new king was a cruel tyrant, the murderer of his own kin, an unbeliever, and a shameless debauchee. Ahmad's jovial indiscretions were forgotten in face of the frantic orgies of the new court, where buffoons played obscene pranks in the public gaze, and acted in mimicry the disgusting scenes which were too

literally enacted in private. The whole city became corrupt; no child was safe; the army was a hotbed of profligacy, and decency was openly defied. Fortunately the new king died in six months; but if morals were relieved, anarchy still rioted in the struggles of his sons and kindred for the throne. Every one sought to grasp whatever he could reach. In 1495 Samarkand was threatened by four separate invasions. Sultán Husain of Herát crossed over from Persia; one son of Mahmúd advanced in force from Hisár; another hurried up from Bukhárá; and Bábar, not to be left out of the race, recovered Asfará and Khojend, and set his face towards the capital. Nothing came of it that year, beyond an agreement which recalls the treaty of Tilsit. Bábar and his cousin, Sultán 'Ali, distrustful of each other, and guarding against surprise, met on horseback in the middle of the river Kohik, and swore to join hands in an attack on Samarkand in the following year.

Accordingly, in May, 1497, Bábar marched on Samarkand; his ally did not appear, but this did not discourage him. He pitched his camp near the city, and soon found that the tájik inhabitants were not indisposed to welcome him. 'A number of traders and others came from the town, and began buying and selling. One day, about afternoon prayers, there was suddenly a general hubbub, and the whole of these Muslims were plundered. Yet such was the discipline of my army that, on my issuing an order that no one should presume to detain any of the

things that had been seized, but that the whole should be restored without reserve before the end of the first watch next day, there was not a piece of thread or a broken needle that was not restored to its owner.' Thenceforward Bábar had the people on his side. They flocked to his camp, till it rivalled in population the capital itself. But Mahmúd's son Baisanghar made a sturdy defence, and many hot skirmishes took place in the shady *Khayábn* beneath the walls. Shaibáni Khán was induced to bring his Uzbegs from Turkistán to relieve the city; but when Bábar formed up to receive the attack, the Uzbegs thought better of the adventure and went home. At last Baisanghar, 'followed by two or three hundred hungry, naked wretches,' fled from the besieged city, and Bábar entered Samarkand in triumph. This was at the end of November, 1497, when Vasco da Gama was finding his way towards Calicut.

The young conqueror rode to the 'Garden Palace,' where the three estates, the nobles, the divines, and the people, paid him homage. He had his heart's desire; he sat in the throne of Tímúr, in the seat of Alexander 'of the two Horns.' Samarkand, the dream of his life, was his. He must 'mark well her bulwarks,' take stock of her treasures; he paced the spreading ramparts himself, and found them 10,600 paces in circuit; he wandered from palace to palace, from pleasaunce to pleasaunce. The whole land, as far as Bukhára, seemed one great garden, full of fruits and crops, and teeming with busy workers. The Kohik

watered the north side of the city, that fertilizing stream which is now well named Zar-afshán, 'gold-diffusing'; on the south ran the Darghám; frequent canals joined the two. In the demesnes watered by these many streams the Kings of Samarkand had built pleasure-houses, and often they would camp in the fine weather on some soft rich meadow, which they screened from public gaze, and converted for the time into a royal pleasaunce. East of the city were 'Perfect Garden' and 'Heart's Delight'—the Trianon of Tamerlane, adorned with paintings of his Indian wars. In the citadel stood the 'Blue Palace,' where every sovereign was enthroned, and where deposed kings were sent to their doom; so that 'to visit the Guksarái' became an ominous metaphor.

Tímúr's mosque stood hard by the Iron Gate; skilled masons and sculptors from Hindústán and Persia and Asia Minor had set their hands to the building, and the colossal inscription from the Korán over the gate testified to the orthodoxy of the 'Scourge of God.' Near the stone fort is a college, and here lie the bones of Tímúr and his descendants, the Kings of Samarkand. Ulugh Beg's observatory, three stories high, full of the astronomical instruments of the age, overlooked the city from the Hill of Kohik, and in the 'Garden of the Alameida,' at the foot of this hill, rose the tower of the Forty Pillars, *Chihil Sitán*, with its hall and open galleries, raised on twisted and fluted columns. In another garden the 'China House' was lined with tiles from Cathay, and the

'Echo Mosque' perpetually stirred the wonder of the holiday folk, who could not fathom its mysterious reverberations. The gardens of Samarkand, with their wealth of melons, apples, pomegranates, and above all the *Sáhibi* grapes, were famed far and wide; and the industries of its populace were exported to all lands. Each trade had its own bazar, and the best paper in the world and the finest crimson stuffs were to be found in its warehouses.

For just a hundred days Bábar revelled in the delights of his beautiful city, and then he lost it. His troops had counted on a handsome booty, but they found a starving town. 'Samarkand,' he wrote, 'had been taken after a hard and trying siege of seven months. On its capture, indeed, the soldiers took plenty of spoil; but the rest of the country had joined me or Sultán 'Ali of its own accord, and of course had not been given over to plunder. . . Samarkand was in so distressed a state when we took it that we had to supply the inhabitants with seed-corn and food to help them to carry on till the harvest. How could one levy taxes from so exhausted a land? My troops were thus brought to much distress, and I had nothing to give them. They began to think of home; they deserted one by one. . . All the Mongols deserted; and at last Ahmad Tambal himself [a leading Beg, who had been highly honoured and rewarded] took himself off and left me.' Bábar found himself almost alone, with but a thousand followers; to add to his misfortunes he fell ill. For four days he was speech-

less, and took no nourishment; only his attendants moistened his tongue with a piece of wet cotton.

Meanwhile Tambal and the other deserters had openly revolted and set up Prince Jahángír on the throne of Farghána. Letter after letter was brought to Samarkand entreating Bábar to come to the rescue of Andiján, where his mother and grandmother were closely besieged by the rebels. At last he was sufficiently recovered to set out; but he had barely reached Khojend when he heard that the governor of Andiján, believing his sovereign dead, had surrendered the city. A messenger, who had been incautiously admitted to Bábar's room at Samarkand during his illness, had found him speechless, and returning to Andiján, had naturally reported him to be in the very article of death. Deprived, as they thought, of their king, the garrison made terms with the enemy. They had even signalized their pact by hanging Bábar's envoy, the holy Khwája Kázi, over the gate of the citadel. It was an act of sacrilege, the martyrdom of a saint:

'I have no doubt,' says Bábar, 'that Khwája Kázi was a saint. What better proof could be had than the single fact that in a short time of all who were concerned in his murder not a trace or vestige remained? They were absolutely extirpated. He was a wonderfully brave man—which is no mean proof of saintship. Other men, brave as they may be, have some little nervousness or trepidation in them: the Khwája had not a particle of either.'

Nor was this the worst; as soon as Bábar had left

Samarkand, Sultán 'Ali occupied it. His kingdom had vanished at both ends. 'For the sake of Andiján I had lost Samarkand, and I found I had lost the one without saving the other.'

He made many attempts to recover both, but at first utterly in vain. He induced his uncle, Mahmúd Khán (who had an eye on Farghána for himself), to march at the head of his Mongols to his support. The Khán, a poor soldier and worse general, but ever ready to do something, however futile, arrived before Akhsi, where he came to an understanding with the rebels, and turned back again. It was Bábar's last hope, and now he saw his own small army melting away. 'The Begs, captains, and troopers, many of them, had wives and children at Andiján; they saw no chance of our regaining it; and great and small, gentle and simple, to the number of seven or eight hundred men, left me altogether. . . Only two hundred or so of all ranks, good and bad, stuck to me, choosing voluntarily a life of exile and hardship.' After the brief triumph at Samarkand the contrast was too bitter even for his buoyant nature: 'I became a prey to melancholy and vexation,' he writes; 'I was now reduced to a sore distressed state, and wept much.'

He was now no king at all. His only possession was the little town of Khojend; all the rest was in the hands of his enemies. Happily they had spared his family, and his mother and his brave old grandmother now rejoined him. It was not in him to give way to despair: 'Filled as I was by the ambition

of conquest and broad sway, one or two reverses could not make me sit down and do nothing.'

What though the field be lost,  
All is not lost—the unconquerable will,  
And courage never to submit or yield.

He went to Táshkend and borrowed Mongol troops from the Khán, with which he surprised and captured Nasúkh, some forty miles from his little capital. In his worst troubles he was never so sad that he found no comfort in the gifts of nature, and with one of those naïve touches which make his Memoirs so real, he notes that when he took Nasúkh 'it was the season when the melons were ripe,' those delicious Ismá'il Shaikhi melons, with a 'yellow skin, mottled like shagreen'—'a wonderful delicate and toothsome melon,' he adds. His force was too small to hold his conquest, and he was obliged regretfully to abandon it, but still the success cheered him, and he returned to Khojend in better heart. It soon became clear, however, that he could not go on living there. The town was too small to support even his two hundred followers; a mere Beg, he says, would not think it enough to maintain his retinue. To burden the inhabitants with himself and his small army was out of the question. His first plan was to borrow a village from the Dughlát ruler of Uratipa, and from that centre to subdue some of the mountain strongholds, half-way between Khojend and Samarkand. But this was on his cousin Sultán 'Ali's land, and he soon



received peremptory notice to quit. So he buried himself among the Ailák hills, not knowing where to lay his head.

It may seem strange that with so many kinsmen he should have had no refuge to turn to; but, as the Turkish proverb has it, 'Kingship knows no kinship,' and his relations perceived in him a rival more distinctly than a distressed cousin. On the north he had tried his uncle, the Khán, and found him wanting. Sultán 'Ali had forgotten his cousinship in the satisfaction of possessing Samarkand, which Bábar had won for him. To the east and south the cities were held by the man whom he abhorred above all mankind. This was Khusrau Sháh, a Kipchák Turk, who had been Mahmúd Mirzá's chief minister, and after his master's death did as he pleased with the eastern part of the kingdom, about Hisár and Kunduz, up to the Hindú Kúsh. Other men found Khusrau liberal and generous, but Bábar had an invincible dislike to him. 'Though he prayed regularly,' he writes, 'and abstained from forbidden foods, he was of a black heart and vicious, of mean understanding and slender abilities, a perjured traitor. For the sake of the brief and fleeting pomp of this vain world, he blinded one and murdered another of his benefactor's sons, and made himself accursed of God, abhorred of men, and meet for shame and execration till the day of final retribution.' Khusrau had put out the eyes of Mas'úd, the son of his old master Mahmúd, and after proclaiming another son,

Baisanghar (the same whom Bábar had driven out of Samarkand), king at Hisár, he murdered him; though he had known both the youths from their infancy. 'Every day,' thundered Bábar, 'every day to the day of judgement, may a hundred thousand curses light on the head of the man who plans or does treachery so black; let all who hear of this deed of Khusrau Sháh pour out curses on him; for he who hears of such work and curses not is himself accursed.' Yet, like most tyrants, Khusrau was a coward: Bábar despised him with his whole soul. In spite, he says, of his many and populous dominions, in spite of his army of five thousand men and his ample materials of war, 'he had not the pluck to face a barn-door fowl.' Shaibáni Khán used to say he could frighten Khusrau away with a wave of his hand, 'like a fly from a platter.'

To go to Khusrau was manifestly impossible, and there was no one else left. So Bábar devoured his melancholy among the Ailák shepherds. Whilst he was meditating one day, 'perplexed and distracted with the hopeless state of his affairs,' a holy man, a friend of happier days, but now an exile and wanderer like himself, came and prayed and wept with him. That very afternoon a horseman appeared at the bottom of the valley. He came with a message that brought the prince to his feet in a moment. 'Ali Dost, who had surrendered Andiján to the rebels, and had been rewarded with the government of the important city of Marghinán, sent to pray his

sovereign's forgiveness, and offered to deliver up to him the city he governed, and to serve him faithfully till death. His conscience pricked him, and like many another he loved his young king when self-interest did not tempt him too much.

Bábar did not hesitate an instant; no man was more prompt in his decision than this boy of fifteen. It was already sunset, but he started at once. All night and next day till noon he rode without drawing rein; half a day's rest for the horses, and then they were off again at midnight, riding all day till dark; and next morning Marghinán was seen about four miles off. Then for the first time it occurred to him that he had no warranty for 'Ali Dost's good faith: the man 'had stickled at no crime,' and might easily play him false. It was like Bábar to run his head into such a difficulty; he acted first, and thought afterwards. But it was now too late to weigh risks:— 'We had passed three days and three nights without rest, and had come a hundred miles without a stop'—a pardonable exaggeration—'neither man nor horse had any strength left; there was no possibility of retreat, nor any refuge to retreat to; having come so far, on we must go. Nothing happens but by God's will.' So on they went, and were rewarded by a loyal welcome from the repentant governor. Bábar and his two hundred and forty men were once more within strong walls. It was the *ποῦ στῶ* that he needed, whence to move the whole kingdom.

The governor of Marghinán was indeed but the

index to a general revulsion of feeling throughout Farghána. The country was groaning under the tyranny of the rebel Begs, and longed for a prince of the old stock. Even the enemy's soldiers began to desert to Bábar; the hill tribes mustered to his ox-tails; Akhsi itself opened its gates to his officers. In vain the rebels sent a relieving party to hold the citadel of Akhsi. They missed the landing-place in the dusk, and were cut to pieces by the royalists, who stripped their mounts and, plunging bare-back into the river, made short work of the boats. The citadel flew the white flag. On this Andiján also declared for Bábar, in June, 1499; Kásán followed:—Farghána once more obeyed its lawful king.

The rebellion was scotched, however, not strangled. Bábar had hardly recovered his kingdom when he did as foolish a thing as a restored exile could devise. Among his supporters were some thousands of Mongols, deserters from Tambal, and these men were a constant thorn in his side. They looted the villages, murdered and outraged the peaceful inhabitants, and gave trouble in every way. The people implored the king to deliver them from these scoundrels, and, moved by one of his imprudent impulses, he gave orders that the Mongols should make restitution. The measure would have been practicable only in a settled country with a strong army; but in Farghána these Mongols were themselves the army, and to coerce them was at that time impossible. The immediate consequence was that four thousand

Mongols mutinied and went over to the rebels. Bábar repented too late. 'It was a senseless thing,' he wrote afterwards, 'to exasperate so many men with arms in their hands. In war and statecraft a thing may seem reasonable at first sight, but it should be weighed and considered in a hundred lights before it is finally decided. This ill-judged order of mine was in fact the ultimate cause of my second expulsion from Andiján.'

Reinforced by these Mongols, Tambal, the rebel leader, took the offensive. Bábar scoured the country to beat up recruits, and collected vast quantities of siege materials, scaling-ladders, *túras* (or siege shields), picks and spades. Tambal twice attacked Andiján, and was beaten off; the king went out in search of him towards Uzkend, and took the fort of Mádu on the way. After this the two armies lay facing each other for a month or more. Bábar made an entrenched camp, protected by a *zaríba* of brushwood, and posted his vedettes carefully. There were frequent skirmishes, and at last Tambal was forced to give battle. It was the young king's first set field, and he won a slight victory, pursuing and looting the enemy. It could not have been a serious defeat for Tambal, since we find the two forces constantly skirmishing all through the winter. Bábar hutted his troops in cantonments near Núsh-áb, and the excitements of war alternated with the pleasures of the chase. It was 'capital hunting-ground,' he says, 'and good cover for game. Near the river Ilámish, in the jungle,

are mountain goats, buck, and wild pig in abundance. In the smaller jungle, scattered in clumps, we found plenty of jungle-fowl and hares. The foxes here are swifter than anywhere else. Whilst in these winter quarters I hunted every two or three days. First we beat up the larger forests for mountain goat and buck, which we chased, and then we hawked in the small jungle for jungle-fowl, or shot them with forked arrows.

The war, such as it was, grew more and more languid. The king gained no important advantage; his troops grew weary, and insisted on returning home. He had to beat a retreat to Andiján, where he was forced by his officers to accept terms. The kingdom was divided: Bábar was to keep the Andiján bank of the Sir, including Uzkend; and his brother Jahángír, the tool of Tambal, was to hold the Akhsi bank. Prisoners were exchanged, and each retired to his capital.

The fifteenth century had ended disastrously for Bábar. He had lost Samarkand, had been driven into exile, harassed by a powerful rebellion, opposed by his brother, deserted by an army, hampered by discontented officers, and had after all only recovered a part of his kingdom, to hold it at the pleasure of his too powerful nobles. The treaty of the spring of 1500 marks low water in his fortunes; but he had not yet sounded the lowest depths.

## CHAPTER IV

### SECOND CONQUEST OF SAMARKAND

1500-1501

WHEN the two brothers made their treaty in the spring of 1500, there had been a talk of Samarkand, and they had agreed to join in conquering it; after which Bábar consented to make over the whole of Farghána to Jahángír. In his worst straits the memory of the hundred days he had ruled in the capital of his ancestors never faded; the *grande idée* was always in his thoughts; he *would* be King of Samarkand. There was little attraction for him in his present sovereignty at Andiján, with successful rebels in power just across the river, and with 'Ali Dost presuming upon his recent services and playing the king in the very palace. The governor of Andiján, who had once surrendered it to his enemies, thought he had more than atoned for his cowardice by giving the king his own again; and he now acted the master, dismissed Bábar's few trusty followers, and stripped him of all but the name of king. To resist was dangerous, with Tambal over the river ready to step in at the smallest encouragement. 'My case was singularly delicate, and I had to be silent. Many

were the humiliations I suffered at that time,' and he was not one to suffer indignities patiently.

An invitation from Samarkand came as a veritable godsend. The great family of the Tarkháns, who had enjoyed special privileges and held high offices for generations, had fallen out with Sultán 'Ali, and had been expelled from Samarkand. They had not forgotten the cheery lad who had been their king for a hundred days, and they offered to help him to recover the throne of Tímúr. The chance of escape from his present humiliations was too good to be even discussed. Bábar set out forthwith (June, 1500), in the absence of his keeper, 'Ali Dost, who, however, caught him up on the way, 'by mere chance and most opportunely,' according to the Memoirs, but one suspects that the Dost was anxious to keep an eye on his protégé. When they reached Uratipa, Kambar 'Ali turned up unexpectedly, 'barefoot and barehead,' having been chased out of his governments by Tambal, in flat violation of the treaty. Bábar cannot suppress a Turki proverb at the expense of his 'muddy-brained' follower. At Yúrat-khán, a little way outside Samarkand, the chief Begs of the city, headed by the Tarkháns, met the king, and did homage. They brought word that Khwája Yahyá was on Bábar's side, and if he co-operated, Samarkand was as good as taken: such was the holy man's reputed influence.

For once, however, it was overrated: Samarkand was not to be surprised this time, and Bábar was



forced to retire on Kish, while he saw the great Khán of the Uzbegs enter the coveted city in his stead. Shaibáni had been admitted as an ally, by the influence of its king's mother; but he threw off the disguise as soon as he was inside, insulted the diplomatic dowager, murdered Sultán 'Ali, and thus put an end to the dynasty of Tímúr in the Oxus country. Bábar's comments on his cousin's temporizing policy and punishment are characteristic: 'From over-anxiety to keep this mortal and transitory life, he left a name of infamy behind him; by following the counsels of a woman, he struck himself out of the roll-call of the renowned. Words need not be wasted on such a creature or on such dastardly doings.' The *gravamen* of the offence, however, lay in Sultán 'Ali's preferring Shaibáni to Bábar.

Once more the young adventurer found himself deserted. 'Ali Dost and his people were the first to leave. 'I had taken a rooted dislike to the man,' says the autobiographer, 'and partly from shame, partly for fear, he could not stay with me. He asked leave to go, and I granted it gladly.' A second time they joined the rebel Tambal, and came to an untimely end: the Dost's son verified the proverb about the fate of traitors to their salt; 'the salt caught his eyes,' literally, for he was blinded by the Uzbegs. After the entry of Shaibáni the Samarkand worthies, who had pressed Bábar to come, discarded him, and betook themselves to his bitter enemy Khusrau Sháh at Hisár. The Khwája who had plotted for his success

was driven away and murdered by the Uzbeks. The young king was again a wanderer. He could not go back to his own land, where Tambal was now supreme; Hisár and Samarkand were more hostile than ever; and he resolved to seek a refuge once more among the friendly hills of Yár-Ailák. It was no easy journey. First he led his small army up the Kamrúd valley, by dangerous tracks among the rocks, 'and in the steep and narrow ways and gorges which we had to climb, many a horse and camel dropped and fell out. After four or five days we came to the col of Sar-i-Ták. This is a pass—and such a pass! Never did I see one so narrow and steep, or follow paths so toilsome and strait. We pressed on, nevertheless, with incredible labour, through fearful gorges and by tremendous precipices, till, after a hundred agonies and losses, at last we topped those murderous steep defiles, and came down on the borders of Kán, with its lovely expanse of lake,' all the more lovely and peaceful to Bábar's appreciative eyes after the horrid gloom of the mountain passes. Thence the banks of the Kohik led him to the Ailáks.

Even now, he was not discouraged. He was a born soldier of fortune, and so long as he had a few hundred men at his back he was ready for any adventure. A short rest, a consultation with his Begs, and he was again on the march for Samarkand. Mad as the project seemed, he had good reasons for the attack. If ever the imperial city was to be his, it must be before Shaibáni had time to establish his power. At present

he was newly arrived; he had murdered the king, disgraced and banished the holy man, and must be detested by the inhabitants. He must not be given time to overcome their dislike; he must not be allowed to take root. Fortunately he was encamped outside the city. If only Bábar could get into Samarkand by a surprise, he was confident that the citizens would rally to his cause—to any cause but the Uzbegs. 'At all events,' he said, in his happy-go-lucky way, 'when once the city is taken, God's will be done.' The first attempt failed: they rode all day and reached Yúrat-Khán at midnight, only to find the garrison of Samarkand on the alert. Then, about November, acting on an auspicious dream, Bábar tried again. This time the saintly Khwája 'Abd-al-Makárim rode beside him, and they made a rapid dash for Samarkand. Fourscore of his best men scaled the wall opposite 'the Lover's Cave,' and seizing the Firúza Gate threw it open just as Bábar galloped up with the main force. 'The city was asleep: only some shop-keepers, peeping out, discovered what had happened, and gave thanks to God. Soon the news spread, and the citizens with great joy and congratulations fraternized with my men. They chased the Uzbegs in every street and corner, hunting them down and killing them like mad dogs.'

The city was won—won by a handful of two hundred and forty men. Bábar took his seat under the great arch, and the people came to acclaim him,

and (what he needed even more) brought him food. Then he mounted and rode pell-mell to the Iron Gate, where the Uzbeys were reported to be making a stand. The rabble, however, had done the business, and the enemy were flying for their lives. Just at this moment Shaibāni himself rode up from his camp outside the city, with an escort of a hundred horse. 'It was a splendid opportunity,' says Bābar, 'but I had only a handful of men with me'; and so Shaibāni got safely away, to work much mischief against him in years to come. But it was no time for forebodings, and Bābar gave himself up to the intoxication of success. He was welcomed to his heart's content: never was triumph more popular; the city was *en fête*, and the great men, nobles, and dignitaries came out and waited on his Majesty as he sat enthroned in the beautiful Garden Palace. 'For-almost one hundred and forty years Samarkand had been the capital of my family. A foreign robber, coming the Lord knows whence, had seized the sceptre that dropped from our hands. God most High now restored it, and gave me back my plundered desolated land.'

They made a chronogram for the event, in the approved Oriental style:—

Tell me, my soul, what is the year?

Bābar Bahādur is conqueror here.

The letters in *Fātiḥ Bābar Bahādur*, taken as numbers, spell 906, the year of the Hijra in which

Bábar conquered Samarkand, or 1500 A. D. To add to his happiness, his mother and other women relations joined him. They had followed him from Andiján, and suffered great privations; but now all was well. The little 'Áisha, to whom he was betrothed when a child, had become his wife at Khojend 'during the troubles,' and at Samarkand she gave birth to his first child: they called the baby Fakhr-an-Nisá, the 'glory of her sex,' but 'in a month or forty days she went to partake of the mercy of God.' Bábar was then just nineteen<sup>1</sup>, and he makes the odd confession, especially curious in an Eastern, that so far he had 'never conceived a passion for any woman, and indeed had never been so placed as even to hear or witness words of love or amorous discourse.' He admits that he did not love 'Áisha, and she had therefore a fair excuse when she afterwards left him. Later on he fell really in love with her youngest sister; but, so far as the records go, Bábar seems to have been singularly insusceptible to the tender passion; though—or because—no one was more attached to the women of his own blood, or more deferential to women in general. He had, however, a dread of a shrew, which may have been rooted in some marital experience. 'May Almighty God,' he fervently exclaims, 'preserve all good Muslims from such a visitation, and may no such thing as

<sup>1</sup> So he says, reckoning by lunar years; if so, the child was born in July, 1501, just before Bábar left Samarkand. He was under eighteen (*solar* years) when he conquered it.

an ill-tempered cross-grained wife be left in the world!'

The first step of the new King of Samarkand was to cultivate, as we should say, 'foreign relations.' He sent embassies to the neighbouring rulers, inviting their friendship and support against the growing power of the Uzbegs. The missions were a failure; some refused all co-operation, others put him off with cold answers; his brother Jahángir, now King of Farghána, sent a paltry hundred men; the Khán, his uncle, furnished a few hundred more; Sultán Husain Mirzá of Herát, the most powerful representative of Tímúr's line, sent never a sword. Bábar consoled himself now and then by 'composing a couplet or two, but did not venture on a complete ode.' In more practical moods he looked to the efficiency of his army, which was rapidly increasing. Most of the towns and villages of the province of Samarkand had fallen into his hands, and fresh levies came trooping in. Some of the Tarkhán nobles, too, returned to him, and by May, 1501, he was in a condition to take the field against Shaibáni.

The Uzbek leader had retired to Bukhárá after Bábar's unexpected arrival at Samarkand, but he was now at Dabúsi, within striking distance, and Bábar marched out to the Bridge Head (*Sar-i-púl*) to meet him. As before, he formed an entrenched zaríba, and so long as he kept behind his defences Shaibáni could not touch him. In an evil moment, however, the stars in their courses hurried on an engagement.

It happened that the Eight Stars [of the Great Bear?] were exactly between the two armies, whereas for the next fortnight they would be on the enemy's side. In his after wisdom Bábar confesses that 'these observations were idle, and there was no excuse for my haste'; but at the moment the Eight Stars persuaded him, and without waiting for the reinforcements which the Tarkhâns and Dughlát Amírs were bringing to his support, the superstitious prince gave battle.

Early on the May morning the troops of Samarkand, man and horse armed in mail, marched out of their entrenchments. The enemy was drawn up ready for them. Shaibáni had the longer line, for he quickly turned Bábar's left, and wheeled upon his rear. This was the usual Uzbek tactic or *tulughma*: first turning the enemy's flank, then charging simultaneously on front and rear, letting fly their arrows at a breakneck gallop, and if repulsed retiring at top speed. Bábar was evidently unprepared for it at the battle of Sar-i-púl, though he learnt to use it with deadly effect in later years in India. His rear indeed changed front, under fire, but so clumsily that the right became separated in the movement; and, although the enemy's front attack was driven back on his centre, Bábar was out of touch with his right, his left was already routed, and his rear hotly engaged. To add to the confusion, his Mongol troopers, instead of fighting, fell to unhorsing and looting their own side. 'Such is the way of those Mongol rascals: if they win, they seize the booty; if they are beaten,

they unhorse and plunder their own allies, and carry off the spoil all the same.' Surrounded and attacked on all sides, by friends and foes alike, with the arrows dropping in from all points of the compass, Bābar's followers broke and fled, and he found himself on the river bank with only ten or fifteen men. The Kohik had to be crossed, and it was out of their depth, but they plunged in, horse and all, heavily armed at all points as they were, and swam across; then, cutting away their horses' heavy trappings and mail, they rode for their lives. As they went they could see their Mongols stripping and murdering their dismounted comrades: Bābar's scorn breaks out in verse:—

Were the Mongols a race of angels, it would still be a vile  
nation;

Were their name written in gold, it would be abomination.  
Beware you pluck not a single ear from a Mongol field,  
For whatever is sown with Mongol seed has an odious yield.

He reached Samarkand, but without an army. Six valiant Begs had fallen, the rest had vanished. He had to defend the city with the help of a loyal but untrained mob, led by a remnant of his dejected followers. In those days, however, strong walls counted for much against even an overpowering superiority in numbers and discipline, and for seven months Bābar held out against Shaibāni's host. The rabble stood by him pluckily, and even ventured out to skirmish with the enemy, covered by a brisk discharge from the crossbows over the gates. Once, under cover of a feigned assault, the Uzbegs got a



footing on the wall by the Needlemakers' Gate: but the sturdy townsmen discovered them, and cut them down as they climbed up on their tall ladders. The nights were made horrible by the din of Shaibáni's big drums, which were beaten loudly before the gate, accompanied by shouts and alarums. Matters could not go on for ever like this. There was no sign of relief.

'Though I had sent ambassadors and messengers to all the princes and chiefs round about, no help came from any. Indeed, when I was at the height of my power, and had suffered as yet neither defeat nor loss, I had received no help, and could hardly expect it now that I was reduced to such distress. To draw out the siege in hopes of any succour from them was clearly useless. The ancients have said that to hold a fortress, a head, two hands, and two feet are needed. The head is a captain, the two hands are two friendly forces advancing from different sides, the two feet are water and food in the fort.'

In this case the head had to act by itself; the friendly hands were not stretched out, and the feet were all but exhausted. There was no corn in Samarkand; the poor were eating dogs and donkeys; the horses were browsing on the branches of trees; people were secretly escaping over the walls. There was nothing for it but surrender, and Bábar capitulated—so he puts it—one can hardly expect him to confess the bald fact, but it is more truthful to say that he fled. His mother and two other ladies escaped with him, but his eldest sister fell into the hands of

Shaibāni and entered his harīm ; evidently she was part of the capitulation<sup>1</sup>.

One would think that nothing could be much more depressing than this midnight exodus from the city of his ambition, which he had twice held and twice lost again, but Bābar's spirits were extraordinarily elastic ; and after a night spent in losing himself and his unfortunate companions in the tangle of the canals, when at the time of morning prayers they at last found their road, we find the desolate exile and his 'muddy-brained' follower indulging in a breakneck gallop. Bābar relates it as if it were the sort of amusement that dethroned monarchs usually pursued :—

'On the road I had a race with Kambar 'Ali and Kásim Beg. My horse got the lead. As I turned round on my seat to see how far I had left them behind, my saddle turned, the girth being slack, and I fell right on my head. Though I sprang up at once and mounted, I did not recover the full possession of my senses till the evening, and the world and all that happened then passed before my eyes like a dream or phantasy and disappeared. The time of afternoon prayers was past before we reached Ilán-útí, where we dismounted, and killing a horse, butchered him and cooked slices of his flesh. We stayed a little time to rest our horses, then remounted and reached the village of Khalíla before day-break : thence to Dizak. . . . Here we found nice fat flesh, bread of fine flour well baked, sweet melons, and excellent

<sup>1</sup> This is clearly stated in the *Shaibāni-nāma*, xxxix ; but it seems the lady was in love with the brave barbarian, who, however, soon divorced her.

grapes in great abundance: thus passing from the extreme of famine to plenty, and from a state of danger and calamity to peace and ease.

From famine and distress we have escaped to repose ;  
We have gained fresh life and a fresh world.  
The fear of death was removed from the heart ;  
The torments of hunger were taken away<sup>1</sup>.

In all my life I never enjoyed myself so much or felt at any time so keenly the pleasures of peace and plenty. Enjoyment after suffering, abundance after want, come with increased relish and afford more exquisite delight. I have four or five times in the course of my life passed thus from distress to ease and from suffering to enjoyment; but this was the first time I had ever been delivered from the assaults of my enemy and the pressure of hunger, and thence passed to the ease of safety and the joy of plenty.'

<sup>1</sup> In the original the first two lines are in Turki, the last two in Persian.

## CHAPTER V

### EXILE

1502

BÁBAR did not see Samarkand again for many years. He had matched his strength against Shaibáni Khán, and the Uzbek had shown himself the stronger. The young prince—he was king of nothing now—did not give in on that account; he sought more than once to cross swords with his powerful adversary; but he made no fresh attempt upon his capital for a long while. For the present he retired among the shepherds on the hills near Uratipa, waiting upon events. He had the happy faculty of being interested wherever he was, and now he found much amusement in talking to the Persian Sarts in the mountain village, and watching their sheep and herds of mares, as he took long rambles barefooted among the pastures. He lodged with the headman of the village, a veteran of seventy or eighty, whose mother was still alive at the age of a hundred and eleven. She had children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren to the number of ninety-six in the district round about, and she delighted the prince with her reminiscences of old days. One of

her people had actually served in Tímúr's army when he invaded Hindústán: 'she remembered it well, and often told us stories about it<sup>1</sup>.' Perhaps the old woman's tales fired her listener's imagination, and led him to dream of that Indian empire which was one day to lie at his feet.

At present nothing lay at his feet but humble peasants and their flocks. He was so poor that he viewed with alarm the arrival of his grandmother, 'with the family and heavy baggage, and a few lean hungry followers,' escaped from Samarkand. His pride had fallen so low that he was persuaded by a politic counsellor to send a present to his more fortunate brother Jahángír: he sent him an ermine cap, and unwillingly added a heavy Samarkand sword for his old enemy Tambal. He lived to regret the sword. The presents were carried by those of his followers who, having nothing but mischief to do in the village, were allowed to return to their homes at Andiján. He made a raid himself in the winter. Shaibáni was ravaging the country about the Sir, and Bábar could not resist the temptation of having a thrust at him. He led his few troopers to Panjkend, but found nothing of the Uzbeks but their tracks. The river was another temptation, for Bábar was a magnificent swimmer, as he afterwards proved in India.

<sup>1</sup> As Tímúr invaded India in 1398, the old woman was a child of seven at the time; but her recollection was doubtless refreshed in after years by the returned warrior.

'It was terribly cold,' he writes, 'and the wind from the desert had lost nothing of its violence and blew keen: so cold was it that in a few days we lost several comrades from its nip. I had to bathe, for religious purification, and went down to a stream that was frozen at the banks but not in the middle, by reason of the swift current. I plunged in, and dived sixteen times, but the biting chill of the water cut through me.'

Another fruitless expedition followed, and then Bábar seriously considered his prospects. He reflected that 'to ramble thus from hill to hill, without house or home, country or resting-place, could serve no good purpose.' His only plan was to go to the Khán his uncle. On June 16, 1502, he kept the great festival, the 'Id-i-Kurbán, at Sháhrukhíya, and then went straight to Táshkend. Mahmúd Khán welcomed him with the hospitality of the desert, but evidently without much sympathy. When Bábar presented him with an elegant quatrain on the miseries of exile, the Khán would not commit himself on the subject: 'it was pretty evident that he had no great skill in poetic diction,' said the mortified poet, but it is also possible that the uncle thought his nephew had brought his misfortunes on his own head. The Memoirs give many curious pictures of Mongol customs, and show the character of the people from whom Bábar drew at least half his blood.

During his stay with his uncle at Táshkend, the restless Khán took a desire to lead his Mongols against Tambal, who was harassing Uratipa. The

army marched to Panjkend, where Bábar assisted in the ceremony of trooping the colours according to Mongol traditions. First the Khán dismounted, and nine ox-tail standards<sup>1</sup> were set before him. A Mongol stood by, holding in his hand an ox's shank-bone, to which he tied a long white cotton cloth. Another fastened three long slips of white cloth below the horse-tail of the standard.

'One corner of one of the cloths the Khán took, and putting it beneath his feet, stood upon it. I stood on a corner of another of the long slips, which was in like manner tied under one of the ox-tails; and Sultán Muhammed Khanikeh [the Khán's son] took the third, and placing the cloth under his feet, likewise stood upon a corner of it. Then the Mongol who had tied the cloths, holding the ox-shank in his hand, made a speech in the Mongol tongue, looking often to the standards, and pointing and making signs towards them. The Khán and all the men formed in line, took *kúmis* in their hands, and sprinkled it towards the standards. All the trumpets and drums struck up at once, and all the soldiers who were drawn up shouted the war-cry. These ceremonies they repeated thrice.'

All this was minutely regulated by precedent, for 'among the Mongols, the rules of Chingiz Kaán are still strictly observed. Each man has his appointed post; those appointed to the right or left wing or centre have their established posts handed down from

<sup>1</sup> The *tug* or standard of the Mongols was made of the tail of a mountain ox. There is an admirable painting of this ceremony in the sixteenth-century Persian M.S. of Bábar's Memoirs preserved in the British Museum (Or. 3,714).

father to son; and those of the greatest trust and rank are at the extremities or flanks.'

After this review, the army marked out a great hunting circle, and hunted as far as the Chahár-Bágh of Burk. Meanwhile Bábar indulged his poetry and melancholy by composing his first *ghazal* or ode, beginning—

I have found in the world no faithful friend but my soul;  
Save mine own heart I have no trusty confidant.

They then marched to the Sir, where the young prince gave the officers a banquet, at which, in true Mongol style, the gold clasp of his girdle was stolen. Some of the Begs deserted to Tambal next day—with the gold clasp, as Bábar suspected. He was out of humour with everything, even with making war: 'this expedition of the Khán' (he says) 'was rather a useless sort of excursion. He took no fort; he beat no enemy; he went and came back again.'

Inaction and dependance did not agree with Bábar's proud and energetic spirit.

'While I remained at Táshkend,' he confesses, 'I endured great distress and misery. I had no country nor hopes of one. Most of my servants had left me out of sheer want; the few who still stood by me could not escort me on my journeys for want of means. When I went to my uncle the Khán's audience, I was attended only by one or two; fortunately this did not happen among strangers, but with my own kindred. After paying my respects to the Khán, my uncle, I went in to wait on [his mother] the Sháh Begum, bareheaded and barefoot, as freely as one might do in one's own home. But at last I was worn out with this un-



settled state, with no house or home, and weary of life. I said to myself, rather than pass my life in such wretchedness and misery, it were better to go my way and hide me in some nook where I might be unknown and undistinguished—to flee away from the sight of man as far as my feet could carry me.'

He thought of China, which he had always longed to visit, and now that he had no ties of kingship, and his family was in safety with the Khán, he resolved to journey into the unknown. His plan was to go and visit his younger uncle, Ahmad Khán, surnamed Aláchá or 'the Slayer,' in Mongolistán, and thence escape to the eastward. But the plan was upset by the unexpected tidings that Ahmad was actually coming to visit his brother Mahmúd, whom he had not seen for a quarter of a century—indeed they had been on no friendly terms. Bábar set out at once to welcome him, and it happened that the meeting between uncle and nephew took place quite suddenly.

'All at once I found myself face to face with him. I instantly dismounted and went forward to meet him. The Khán, seeing me get off, was much upset. He had meant to dismount somewhere and receive me, seated, with all the ceremonies; but I had come upon him too quickly, and dismounted in such a hurry, that there was no time for etiquette. The moment I sprang from my horse, I knelt down and then embraced my uncle. He was a good deal agitated and disconcerted.'

However, on the morrow, 'the Slayer' had his wish, and carried out the formalities. He sent Bábar

a complete Mongol dress, and one of his own horses ready saddled. 'The dress consisted of a Mongol cap embroidered with gold thread, a long frock of China satin adorned with flowered needlework, a Chinese belt of the old style, with whetstone and purse-pocket, to which were hung three or four things like the trinkets women wear at their necks, such as a perfume box and little bag.' They journeyed together to Táshkend, and the elder Khán came out a dozen miles to meet his brother. Then he awaited him, seated solemnly under a tent.

'The younger Khán went straight up, and on coming near him in front, turned off to the left, and fetched a circle round him, till he was again in front, when he dismounted, and advancing to the proper distance for the *kornish* obeisance, bowed nine times, and then came up and embraced him. The elder Khán on his approach stood up for the embrace; they stood a long time clasped in each other's arms. Then the younger Khán, on retiring, again bowed nine times; and when he presented his *pishkash* (or tributary offering) he bent again many times, after which they both sat down. All the younger Khán's men were dressed in the Mongol fashion, with the native caps and flowered China satin frocks; their quivers and saddles were of shagreen, and their horses were decked and caparisoned in a singular fashion. The younger Khán came with but few followers—less than two thousand. He was a stout, courageous man, and a perfect master of the sabre, his favourite weapon. He used to say that the mace, javelin, and battle-axe, if they hit, could only be relied on for a single blow. This sharp, trusty sword he never allowed to be away from him; it was always either at his waist or

in his hand. As he had been brought up in an out-of-the-way country, he was something rude of manner and uncouth of speech.'

The two Kháns, joining their forces, celebrated their reunion by a warlike expedition. Tambal must be crushed. He was then at Andiján, and thither they advanced against him (July, 1502), sending Bábar with a detachment to move upon Ush and Uzkend, and thus take the enemy in the rear. He took Ush by surprise, to the delight of the inhabitants, who dreaded Tambal; and the 'Ils and Ulúses,' or wandering tribes, flocked to his standard. Uzkend and Marghinán declared for their former king, with all the country on the southern side of the Sir, save Andiján itself. Meanwhile Tambal lay unperturbed between Akhsi and Karmán, facing the Kháns, in his entrenched zaríba. Bábar bethought him of a night reconnoissance to Andiján, where the citizens at least were understood to be loyal. He set out one evening from Ush, and at midnight was within a couple of miles of the capital. Then he sent forward Kambar 'Ali with a party to open a secret conference with the Khwájás and leading men. Bábar himself waited their return, seated on horseback with the rest of his men. He must tell the story himself:—

'It might be about the end of the third watch of the night, some of us were nodding, others fast asleep, when all at once kettle-drums struck up, accompanied by warlike shout and hubbub. My men being off their guard and oppressed with drowsiness, not knowing how many or how

few the enemy might be, were seized with panic and took to disorderly flight. I had no time to rally them, but advanced towards the enemy, accompanied by Mír Sháh Kochín, Bába Shírzád, and Dost Násir. Except us four, all ran off to a man. We had gone but a little way when the enemy, after discharging a flight of arrows, raised the war-cry, and charged upon us. One fellow on a horse with a white blaze came up to me. I let fly an arrow which hit the horse, and he instantly fell dead. The others drew rein a little. My three companions said, "The night is dark, and it is impossible to judge the number and force of the enemy; all our troops are fled; we are but four, and with such a number how can we hope to win? Let us follow our party, rally them, and bring them back into action." So we galloped off and overtook our men, but in vain we flogged them—we could not make them stand anyhow. Again we four turned and gave the pursuers a flight of arrows. They halted a space; but after one or two volleys they saw we were only four, and set off again in pursuit of our men, to strike and unhorse them. Three or four times we covered and protected our people in this way, and as they would not rally, I was constantly turning with my three companions to keep the enemy in check and bring them up short with our arrows.

They kept up the pursuit, nevertheless, for the space of five miles, till they came to some hills, when Bábar saw how few they were, and cried out, 'Come, let us charge them.' When they charged, the others stood still! And they proved to be some of their Mongol allies, who had mistaken them in the dark for the enemy. After this confusion the reconnaissance naturally failed, and all returned abashed to Ush.

Nevertheless Tambal became disheartened: the people were going back to their old allegiance, and he felt he must soon break up his force and retire. Bábar, discovering this downheartedness, forthwith marched again upon Andiján, met a body of the enemy outside, and drove them in; but was dissuaded by his old Begs from forcing an entrance in the dark: 'Had we done so,' he remarked afterwards, 'there is not the shadow of a doubt that the place would have fallen into our hands.' As it was, while negligently sleeping in the open plain, without pickets or sentries, they were surprised at dawn by the main body under Tambal himself:—

'Kambar 'Ali galloped up, shouting, "The enemy are upon us—rouse up!" Having so said, without a moment's halt he rode on to give the alarm. I had gone to sleep, as my custom was even in times of security, without taking off my *jáma*, and instantly arose, girt on my sabre and quiver, and mounted my horse. My standard-bearer seized the standard-pole, but had no time to tie on the ox-tail; so seizing the staff as it was, he leapt on horseback, and we went towards the quarter whence the enemy were advancing. When I mounted there were ten or fifteen men with me. By the time I had advanced a bow-shot we fell in with the enemy's skirmishers. At this moment there might be about ten men with me. Riding quickly up to them and shooting our arrows, we came upon the foremost, smote them and drove them back, and pressing on pursued them for another bow-shot, when we fell in with the main body of the enemy. Sultán Ahmad Tambal was standing there [in front of his troops] with about a hundred men; he was speaking with

another man in front of the line, and in the act of saying, "Smite them! Smite them!" but his men were sidling in a hesitating way, as if saying, "Shall we flee? Let us flee!" yet without budging.

'There were now only three men left with me—Dost Násir, Mirzá Kúli Kukildásh, and Kerímdád Khodáídád the Turk-mán. One arrow was on my notch and I shot it point blank at Tambal's helmet. Again I felt the quiver, and brought out a barbed arrow, which my uncle the Khán had given me. Unwilling to throw it away, I returned it, and thus lost time. Then I put another arrow on the string and went forward, the others lagging a little behind. Two men came straight on to meet me, the forwarder was Tambal. There was a causeway between us. He mounted on one side of it just as I mounted on the other, and we met so that my right hand was towards my enemy and Tambal's right towards me. Except for his horse, Tambal was completely in mail. I had on my cuirass, and carried my sabre and bow and arrows. I drew up to my ear and sent my arrow right at his head, when at the same instant an arrow struck me on the right thigh and pierced through and through. Tambal rushed on, and, with the great Samarkand sword I had given him, smote me such a blow on my steel head-piece as to stun me. Though not a link of the cap was cut, my head was severely bruised. I had neglected to clean my sword, so that it was rusty, and I lost time in drawing it.

'I was alone, solitary, in the midst of foes. It was no time for standing still, so I turned my bridle, receiving another sabre stroke on my quiver. I had gone back seven or eight paces when three foot-soldiers came up and joined me. Tambal attacked Dost Násir with the sword. They followed us about a bow-shot. . . . God directed us aright, so that we came exactly upon one of the fords of the river. Just after crossing, Dost Násir's horse fell from exhaustion. We halted

to remount him, and passing among the hills got back to Ush safely<sup>1</sup>.

The behaviour of his two uncles now began to make him uneasy. Mahmúd Khán very coolly made over to his brother all the places which Bábar had reconquered of his patrimony, on the ground that Ahmad Khán required a good position close at hand in order to withstand Shaibáni. They would presently conquer Samarkand, and Bábar should have that in exchange for Farghána. He was not deceived; it was not the first time that his uncle had coveted the little kingdom. 'Probably,' he wrote, 'all this talk was merely to overreach me, and had they succeeded, they would have forgotten their promise. But there was no help for it: willing or not, I had to seem content.' He went to visit his younger uncle, who seeing him walking painfully with a stick, by reason of his wound, ran out beyond the tent-ropes and embraced him heartily, saying, 'Brother, you have quitted yourself like a hero.' The visitor noticed that the tent was small and untidy: melons, grapes, and stable furniture were lying about in a muddle. The Khán, however, was kind, and at once sent his own surgeon to dress the wound.

'He was wonderfully skilful in his art,' says Bábar, in all good faith. 'If a man's brains had come out he could cure him, and he could even easily heal severed arteries. To some wounds he applied plasters; for others he prescribed

<sup>1</sup> A few words have been added from Bábar's second account of this adventure (pp. 265-6 of Erskine's translation).

doses. To my thigh wound he applied the skin of some fruits which he had prepared and dried, and he did not insert a seton. He also once gave me something like a vein to eat. He told me that "a man once had his leg broken so that part of the bone as large as one's hand was completely shattered. I cut open the integuments, extracted the whole of the shattered bone, and inserted in its place a pulverised preparation, which grew in place of the bone, *and became bone itself*, and the leg was perfectly cured." He told me many similar strange and wonderful stories of cures, such as the surgeons of our parts are totally unable to effect.'

No doubt this extraordinary operator made a good cure of the wound in the thigh, for we find his patient soon afterwards riding to Akhsi, at the invitation of Tambal's younger brother, Shaikh Báyazíd. This strange partnership led to many adventures.